(ii) Global Tenders were floated by CIL in the years 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 for exporting coal to external markets. No bids were received for export to Bangladesh. Only one bid for export to Nepal was received and this was rejected as the bid price was very low and not acceptable.

(iii) Possiblity of export of North East coal to Myanmar was also explored through the Indian Embassy there. However, the Indian Embassy informed that there is no prospect for marketing of thermal coal in Myanmar.

(iv) A Regional Institute of Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited has been established at Tura, Meghalaya. This institute is meant to render services for re-construction and rehabilitation of the private mining industries in Meghalaya, keeping in view the need for conservation and safety.

(v) A meeting was convened on 13.09.1997 at Shillong with the representatives of Government of Meghalaya. Government of Meghalaya was of the view that it would be very difficult to take any action for stoppage of unscientific mining on account of the prevailing land rights in Meghalaya.

Views of GSI specialists on Earthquake in Darjeeling

2221. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that earthquake specialists of Geological Survey of India have expressed that there might be disastrous earthquake in Darjeeling at any moment;

(b) whether it is also a fact that they have suggested some measures to avoid heavy losses; and

(c) if so, the action proposed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) A few micro-earthquake (MEQ) surveys have been carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) in the Darjeeling/Sikkim areas of the Eastern Himalaya in the recent years

(1993—1999). The surveys revealed that the micro seismic activity in this part of the Himalayas is not very intense. The Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya is, however, located within the Himalayan Main Seismic Belt (HMSB) and any strong earthquake (M-6.0) may occur in any part of the HMSB. If such an earthquake occures in the eastern Himalaya, it can, of course, cause damage including slope instability problems in Darjeeling and nearby areas. There is no methodology as on today, to predict earthquakes in space and time.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

Potential of Bio-Mass Power

2222. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that against an estimated potential of 1700 MW of Bio Mass Power the installed capacity is only 69.5 MW; and

(b) if so, what is Government's plan to increase its installed capacity to fully exploit this potential?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN): (a) Against a total estimated potential of about 19,500 MW, a total boimass power capacity of 256 MW has so far been installed in the country.

(b) Financial assistance is provided by way of capital subsidy for a limited number of demonstration projects and interest subsidy for commercial projects. The Central and State Government also provide fiscal and financial incentives, including relief from taxes and duties, accelerated depreciation, etc. 14 States have so far announced promotional policies for wheeling, banking and buy-back of electricity generated from commercial projects. Soft loans are provided by the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) for commercial projects. Financial assistance is also provided for preparation of detailed project reports, business/interaction meets and training programmes.

NGO's Association for Power Generation from Non-Conventional Energy Sources

2223. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state: